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NEW GI BILL AMENDMENTS OF 1985

AUGUST 1 (legislative day, JULY 16), 1985.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. GOLDWATER, from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 752]

The Committee on Armed Services, to which was referred the bill (H.R. 752) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure an orderly transition to the new active-duty and Guard and Reserve GI Bill educational assistance programs provided in the Veterans' Educational Assistance Act of 1984, having considered the same, reports unfavorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do not pass.

INTRODUCTION

On March 25, 1985, the House of Representatives considered and passed H.R. 752, the proposed "New GI Bill Amendments of 1985", a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure an orderly transition to the new educational assistance program established by chapter 30 of that title. On March 28, the measure as passed by the House was received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

On April 18, 1985, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs ordered the measure reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. On June 27, 1985 the Veterans' Affairs Committee favorably reported the measure with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. On that same day, the measure was referred to the Committee on Armed Services for a period not to exceed forty-five days. On July 25, 1985, the Committee on Armed Services met in open session, considered H.R. 752, and voted, without a dissenting vote, to unfavorably report the measure.

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SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

H.R. 752, as passed by the House, would accelerate the effective date of the educational assistance programs for active duty and Selected Reserve personnel established by the Veterans' Educational Assistance Act of 1984 (Title VII of the Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1985; Public Law 98-525), hereinafter "the 1984 Act", from July 1, 1985, to the date of enactment of H.R. 752. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee reported version of H.R. 752 would effectuate the same change.

Additionally, H.R. 752, as passed by the House, would extend eligibility for educational assistance under the active duty program established by the 1984 Act to prior service personnel who return to active duty after a break in service. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee reported version of H.R. 752 would address this issue in a slightly different manner by granting the Secretary of Defense (or the Secretary of Transportation in the case of the Coast Guard) the discretion to offer the educational benefits of the active duty program under the 1984 Act to prior service personnel who return to active duty after a break in service.

Furthermore, H.R. 752, as reported by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, would extend the deadline for enrollment in the "Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)" by six months from July 1, 1985, until December 30, 1985. Under the 1984 Act, enrollments in VEAP were prohibited during the operation of the programs under the 1984 Act—July 1, 1985, to June 30, 1988.

BASIS OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The Committee determined that the changes that would be made by H.R. 752 were unnecessary at this time. Inasmuch as the measure was not referred to the Committee until June 27, 1985, the need to accelerate the July 1, 1985, effective date of the educational programs under the 1984 Act no longer existed. Additionally, the Committee did not believe that there was a need to enhance recruiting incentives for prior service personnel at this time through extending the 1984 Act's programs to such personnel. Finally, because enrollments in VEAP have already been terminated because of the start of operation of the 1984 Act's programs on July 1, 1985, the Committee believed it was unnecessary, and perhaps counterproductive to the new programs, to reopen enrollments in VEAP at this time.

In addition, the Senate-passed version of the Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1986, (S. 1160), contained several provisions to the educational programs established by the 1984 Act. In conference with the House of Representatives, these changes to the active duty and Selected Reserve programs were opposed by the House conferees. As a result, the Senate conferees agreed to recede from the Senate's amendments to the 1984 Act's programs for personnel entering military service after July 1, 1985. The Statement of Managers accompanying the conference report reflects the conferees' agreement to permit the programs established by the 1984 Act to operate for at least one year without changes to those programs.

For these reasons, the Committee agreed to unfavorably report H.R. 752 and recommend that it do not pass.

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